

AN
E S S A Y
—
ON THE
NECESSITY
OF
REVEALED RELIGION.

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ESSAYS

OF THE

NECESSITY



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Essay was written in consequence of perusing the following Extract from the proceedings of the French Convention, dated Nov. 7. 1793.

A letter was read, signed Parent, Rector of Bossie la Bertraude, Nov. 4th. In this letter the writer owns, that revealed Religion is a mere imposture, and that, renouncing its tenets, he only means to preach,
A henceforth,

henceforth, the principles of republican morality. The Convention, after a short debate, decreed honourable mention of this letter. Gobet Archbishop of Paris, attended by his Vicar, also abjured his episcopal functions and revealed religion (loud cries of *vive la republique* resounded at this moment through the hall). The Archbishop was followed by the Rector, Tangiard, and several others, who imitated the apostasy of the Archbishop of Paris, were received with no less applause, and with the civic kifs of the President.

When Revelation is attacked, in

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so daring and unexampled a manner, by men grown grey in their former professions of attachment to it, it is hardly possible not to notice, and endeavour to check, such impious falsehood, and such Judas-like apostasy.

Treatises on theological subjects are sometimes so prolix, that the avocations of men will not allow sufficient time for their perusal. To avoid this objection, instead of detaining the reader by a minute and particular history of Paganism, such an outline of it has only been taken, as was necessary to form a contrast between the morality and
 theology

theology of mankind, before, and
 since revelation; and from that
 contrast to deduce the necessity,
 the use, and beneficial tendency, of
 revealed Religion.

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IN this Essay, an attempt will be made to prove, that a revelation of the Will and Attributes of the Deity to mankind was absolutely necessary, to vindicate the honour

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of God's Name on earth, and to promote the temporal and eternal happiness of man; and that, by the doctrines of Revelation, these important objects have been essentially accomplished.—It has been usually and justly remarked, that revealed religion was necessary from man's theological ignorance: in the following proposition, an endeavour will be made to prove that it was no less requisite from the depravity of his passions.

PROPOSITION I.

An idolatrous worship was so favourable to the temporal interests of man, and to the indulgence

gence of his criminal passions, that, however offensive to God, or however human reason might detect and despise its errors, it would nevertheless have continued for ever the public and external worship of the world, unless it had been interdicted, and its folly and impiety exposed, by an express communication of the will of God to man.

The revelation of the will and attributes of the Deity, promulgated to the world by Moses and our blessed Saviour, having been made by the express appointment of God, it is necessarily

immutable and everlasting. It is founded on a rock, and remains impregnable, however assaulted. It despises equally, the malevolence of Hobbes, the insidious arguments of Bolingbroke, the sneer of Gibbon, the vanity of French writers, the apostacy of French priests, and the blasphemy of French conventionists. It wants no foil or collateral support. It shines, like the sun, from its own original, and not from any borrowed light. Its splendour is not in the least augmented by reflection, or by the practice of those, who endeavour to enhance and appreciate its value, by an unfair representation of paganism. Those who are at
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all conversant with the theological opinions of the ancient philosophers, and especially with those of Plato and Cicero (which were disseminated through Greece and the Roman Empire), are so far from considering the literate pagans as wholly ignorant of the nature of God, that they are astonished to observe how high a flight human reason was permitted to soar, in the discovery of His attributes (*a*). And though there was much theological knowledge essential to the glory of God, and the welfare of man, which the wisest pagan philosophers did not, nor ever could, know, for want of an express revelation; yet they

knew enough to incur this severe
 censure of St. Paul: “(b) When
 “they knew God, they glorified
 “Him not as God, but changed the
 “glory of the uncorruptible God
 “into an image made like to cor-
 “ruptible man, and to birds and
 “beasts and creeping things.” Their
 knowledge was their crime; for
 whilst all the literate men of Egypt,
 Greece, and Rome, knew in their
 hearts that there was only one su-
 preme God, they concealed this
 knowledge from the illiterate, from
 secular and worldly motives; and
 suffered His glory to be profaned in
 the most shocking manner, by an
 idolatrous worship equally blasphemous

mous and absurd; encouraging this worship by externally joining in it, though they internally despised it. The learned Dr. Cudworth, in his Intellectual System, has taken the pains to make extracts from the writings of every Poet and Philosopher of character both Greek and Roman; in which he proves that, Epicurus alone excepted, they uniformly assert the Unity and Supremacy of the (c) Deity; and though they all (Socrates and Plato equally with other Philosophers) admit a plurality of Gods, (d) they universally suppose these Gods to be in subjection to the supreme Deity. This important point is

rendered indisputably clear from the information communicated by the Hierophant, or high Priest of the Eleusinian mysteries. Whoever was initiated into these mysteries, (and all literate people were) was expressly informed of the unity and omnipotence of the Deity; and that all other nominal Gods were only dead men deified. But though the literate pagans possessed this knowledge of God, the illiterate (the bulk of mankind) did not, but were at all times, till the establishment of Christianity, in a state of gross idolatry. The Canaanites paid divine homage to Devils, and sacrificed their children
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in a brazen image to their idol Moloch. They were guilty of such horrid, such unnatural vices, as at last attracted the exemplary vengeance of God, and caused their extirpation. The Egyptian priests indeed had all the knowledge of God communicated by the Eleusinian mysteries, these mysteries being of Egyptian origin: but the people of Egypt in general profaned the worship of God, in a manner scarcely credible. They worshipped all sorts of animals as God. These animals were placed in temples, and maintained, as Diodorus informs us, at an extravagant expence. The bull Apis, he affirms, had magnificent
 Temples

Temples erected to him; at his death all Egypt went into mourning, and he was buried with funeral pomp at an immense charge. Such was the senseless idolatry of the Egyptians.

The theology of the Greeks was neither so horrid as that of the Canaanites, nor so absurd as the Egyptian, though it partook of both; for in the latter ages of Greece, they offered human sacrifices, (e) and worshipped men and women as Gods and Goddeses. With respect to the Romans, they were never guilty of immolating the human species; but, in common with the Egyptians and Grecians, they

they paid divine worship to men and women, to such monsters even as the emperors Caracalla (*f*) and Commodus, and the empress Faustina.—Both profane and sacred history describe the Romans, in their most enlightened age, to have been plunged into every species of wickedness that can be imagined. And though Horace and Juvenal may be supposed to exaggerate in the description of their immoralities, it cannot be imagined St. Paul should do so. In his first chapter to these people, he tells us of their idolatry and abominable excesses; that they changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served

served the creature more than the Creator ; that their very women did change the natural use into that which is against nature ; and the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working that which is unseemly : that they were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, &c. &c.

In this miserable and depraved state was the first and greatest nation upon earth ; the lower class wholly ignorant of the nature and attributes of God, and the higher class wallowing

lowing in the grossest sensuality, like brute beasts. Surely the honour of God's moral government of the world was concerned in a reformation of this shocking and deplorable state of morality and religion: for if the worship of God was always to have continued in this degraded state, a state that dishonoured, nay insulted God, instead of glorifying him, it seems as if it would have been much better that man, like the brutes, should not have been endued with the privilege and faculty of worshipping Him. And since, by a trial of the reason of man, during a period of four thousand years, it was evidently incompetent

competent to the discovery of a mode of worshipping God in spirit and truth, which God requires to be done, it appears no less necessary for His own honour, than it does for the welfare of man, that God should be pleased to reveal His will to the world, and that He should inform, not a few Philosophers only, but all His creatures, of the particular way in which He chose to be worshipped. God in His mercy to mankind was pleased to do this; otherwise there can be no doubt that the human race, till this present time and for ever, would have continued in an idolatrous state. For though the Egyptian priests were sufficiently

ciently informed of the glorious essence, the omniscience, and omnipotence of God, to have instructed the lower classes of mankind, at least so far as to have prevented their affronting God, by worshipping dogs and crocodiles; and though the Greeks and Romans were likewise sufficiently informed, to have prevented the horrid, obscene, and blasphemous worship that was paid to those sensual and lascivious deities, Bacchus, Venus, and Cotys; yet, without the peculiar interposition and intervention of God, it cannot be justly imagined that an attempt even would have been made to abolish idolatry. Th
reason

reason on which this idea is particularly founded is, because the abolition of it militated against three of the most powerful passions of the human heart. It militated against the pleasures, the ambition, and the political interest of the kings, princes, and great men of the world. As to their lascivious and sensual pleasures, they were rather encouraged than prohibited by the pagan theology; and the practice of them was justified by the example of the Gods; it being a proverbial expression among the Romans, when blamed for the commission of any flagrant crime, "Why do you censure me, when you acknowledge that
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“the Gods do the same?” And in one of the comedies of Aristophanes, the same execrable and abominable expression is uttered on the stage.—With respect to the ambition of their kings and princes, pagan theology was favourable to it in the highest degree, as they were flattered with divine honours being paid to them, sometimes whilst alive, and, after their death, with being ranked in the number of the Gods.—In regard to their power and political interest, it was equally supported by pagan theology, from the superstitious subjection, and shameful imposition, which they continually exerted, and practised

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on the minds and understandings of the vulgar, by their oracles, divinations, and auguries. There is great reason to believe that these were only so many state engines to influence and subdue the minds of the lower classes of the people to whatever purposes they pleased: (g) for the great pontifical office in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, was always executed by the first person in these respective empires: and in every state, there is, and always must be, so close a connection between its secular and religious government, that, it is fairly to be presumed, whenever Julius Cæsar (who was himself Pontifex Maximus) or any other emperor,

ror, had determined on some war-like exploit, care was taken that the soldiery should be informed the pullets had pecked their grain, and the bull had wagged his tail, in such a manner as prognosticated success to the undertaking (*b*).

The interest of the men of rank was likewise materially concerned in supporting paganism, from the vast patronage it gave them, and from the power they consequently had, to provide for their friends and dependents. Hesiod tells us there were thirty thousand Gods inhabiting the earth, who are subjects of Jupiter and guardians of men; and one of the Roman Poets sar-

castically observed, there were more Gods than men in Rome. The pagan worship was likewise extremely costly and splendid. Without reckoning the lucrative institution of the Eleusinian mysteries, for initiation into which money was paid, every God had a set of priests. Their number therefore must have been exceedingly great; and the patronage in proportion. For the abovementioned reasons, men of power and rank would have been averse to the abolition of idolatry; and the lower classes of the people, though from different motives, would have been equally so. We may observe from the Acts of the Apostles

Apostles how much Demetrius the silversmith opposed the doctrines of St. Paul, and how much he was alarmed, lest, by the extinction of idolatry, he should be prevented from making his silver shrines for the Temple of Diana: and we may be confident that there were not only Demetrius's but statuaries, and a great variety of artificers, in every other city as well as Ephesus; whose livelihood depended on a worship which was so costly and magnificent; every one of whom would equally have opposed its suppression.

But the pagan worship was not only in the highest degree costly and

magnificent; it was likewise extremely joyous and flattering to the senses. The number of feasts and holydays they were perpetually making to their numerous Gods and Goddeses was astonishingly great. These were celebrated in a manner very much calculated to captivate and delight mankind. The choicest of their meats, fruits, and wines were offered in their sacrifices, and whatever was not immediately used in sacrifice was afterwards partaken of by the worshippers, after the manner of a modern feast. For this purpose, a large table was always placed in the middle of their (i) temples; and this feast was frequently

quently attended with musick and dancing. When they sacrificed to Bacchus, it was a part of their religion to drink till they were intoxicated; and Plato in his Book of Laws justifies this sensual practice.—Supposing it therefore possible for the rulers of the pagan world to have known a religion as pure as the religion of Christ, they would neither have had power nor inclination of themselves to have disclosed it to the vulgar, or to have introduced it into general use, without an entire alteration in their own hearts, and affections, and likewise in those of the lower classes of the people.

It is very remarkable, and an

argument strongly in favour of revelation and of the peculiar interposition of God, that Plato should directly assert, "It is very difficult to know God, but absolutely impossible to reveal him to the vulgar."

* Neither could the priests have effected any material change in pagan worship, had they had it in their power, or been so inclined. Before they could have attempted the introduction of a pure religion, they must at least have preached a pure morality, which they could never do, whilst the populace believed that their Gods had sensual passions like men, and indulged them in the same way. (*k*) If they preached temperance,

temperance, how were they to celebrate the feast of Bacchus? if chastity, they insulted Venus and Cotys. The pagan priests, however, were very unlikely to attempt any thing of this kind, if we may credit the character Juvenal gives of them in his second Satire: neither would the accumulated knowledge of mankind, disseminated through the medium of commerce, and since by the art of printing, have been able to diffuse such information as would have extirpated idolatry. As to commerce, it existed from the earliest times, and prevailed in a very high degree in the remotest ages. (1) And though the art of printing

was

was not invented, all the theological and moral knowledge of which the world was in possession, was well known and universally divulged. There were great libraries, such as the Alexandrian, &c. for general and public resort. (*m*) Exclusive of which, history acquaints us, that every man of rank, both in Greece and Rome, kept several slaves, for the express purpose of copying such books as were worthy of perusal. These slaves, after they had taken copies for their masters, had permission to take other copies for themselves, which they sold at a moderate price: so that if the truths of theology could have been discovered

discovered by man, they would have been generally known, at least by learned men. The fact is, the human mind has an intellectual power given it only to a certain degree: but that this power is naturally very unequal even to the investigation, and still less equal to the discovery, of things of a celestial nature, we may gather from our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus: "If," says our blessed Lord, "I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" The truths of the Christian religion are of a nature much too perfect, too pure, and too sublime, to be discovered

discovered by such a fallen animal as man. Can the united wit of all mankind tell us what the feelings of the soul will be, or in what state it will be, on its immediate disunion from the body? As revelation does not inform us, the reason of man can tell us nothing on this subject; nor could it any more have told us, that we were created in the image of God; that this life is a state of probation; that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world; and those other great truths which He has been pleased by revelation to communicate to the race of men.

If the premises intended to be
established

established in this Proposition are admitted, this conclusion will follow, that the impure and idolatrous worship of the heathen world, though in the highest degree disgraceful to God, inglorious to man, and inimical to his real welfare, yet was so agreeable, in a variety of particulars, to the interest and sensual passions of the highest and lowest classes of mankind, that even if man had had the power, as he would have considered it contrary to his interest, he never would have attempted its abolition. Consequently there never would have been a reformation of idolatrous worship, unless it had been effected
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by the immediate interposition of God, and an exprefs revelation of His will; therefore revelation was necessary. That there was this interposition a candid and reasonable mind would be convinced even from this single fact, were there no other, that the doctrines of Christ, which were promulgated to the world by twelve illiterate men, prevailed in such a manner as to become the national religion of the most enlightened part of the globe, when the emperor Julian could not establish the œconomy of Plato's republick even in a village, though he employed philosophers, and men of the greatest eloquence, to influence the

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the inhabitants to conform to it. Further, that these illiterate men inculcated a religion, whose doctrines required a renunciation of the religion in which the pagan had been educated from his infancy; and likewise required his relinquishing almost every thing that was flattering and agreeable to his worldly interest, his ambition, and his senses, without offering him any thing in this world for so very great a sacrifice. In reality a greater absurdity never yet entered the human mind than the supposition, that the religion of Christ should establish itself, without supernatural means, when its founders were without wealth, power,

er, education or party ; and its opponents possessed all these advantages. There is so manifest a disproportion between the cause and the effect, that it is impossible to accede to so extravagant, so romantic, a conclusion, entirely contrary to reason, to experience, to probability, and to the natural course of human affairs.

PROPOSITION II.

Revelation was necessary from man's previous ignorance of God's attribute of goodness, and of those personal obligations he is under to God so distinctly revealed in the Scriptures. It was necessary from
man's

man's prior ignorance of his origin, probationary state, and destiny; from his ignorance of the true nature of humanity and of ambition; and from his inability to worship God in spirit and in truth. Its necessity is inferred likewise from the justice of God; for man being an accountable agent, it is just and necessary he should be furnished with some rule or standard of conduct, as a criterion for his present actions and his future judgment.

The literate pagans had very sublime ideas of the omniscience, omnipotence, and ubiquity of the supreme Deity; yet they knew him only partially, as a man would the

sun who had never seen its meridian glory, but only its rays through a grove of trees : they were ignorant of one of his most important attributes, and which it was impossible mere human reason ever could discover—I mean God's attribute of goodness ; His affection to the human race ; without which knowledge all religion is at best merely ceremonial, and without any vital effect ; for without a firm belief in the goodness of God, it is impossible either to love Him, or to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Destitute of this knowledge, the pagans must have been in a most comfortless situation ; they found themselves

selves placed in a world without
 their consent, and without any
 knowledge of their origin. This
 world they were conscious they must
 quit, without any knowledge of
 their destiny. They found them-
 selves liable to numberless diseases
 of body, and various afflictions of
 mind. They saw fortune inconstant,
 virtue degraded, and vice triumph-
 ant; which induced one of their
 philosophers to remark, that the un-
 interrupted good fortune of the rob-
 ber Harpalus was a direct testimony
 against the justice of the Gods.
 Indeed they had real reason to con-
 sider life as mere vanity; and one of
 the best Roman Emperors, Severus,

passed that censure on it, "I have
 "been all things, and found them
 "all without value." Having no
 assurance of future happiness to
 counterpoise their present evils, they
 had little or no reason to imagine
 that their comfort was at all con-
 sulted in their creation; and indeed
 they carried this idea to so criminal
 a length, that it was their common
 custom in great instances of ill for-
 tune to curse their Gods. Love of
 God is the noblest affection in the
 heart of man. But the reason of
 man must first be convinced that
 there are adequate causes for this
 love, or it will not exist at all : his
 reason must likewise seriously reflect
 on

on those causes, or it will have no radical depth, or produce any effect on his heart. Thus revelation was absolutely necessary, because that alone could inform man of those personal obligations to God, which are the chief causes, I may say the only natural foundation, of love to Him; the best stimulus, and most rational motive of fervent worship, and indeed the very essence of true religion. Accordingly it is so considered by St. John, who observes, "We love God because He first loved us." May I be permitted to illustrate, by the following simile, the different manner in which the mind of a Pagan and a Christian

may be rationally imagined to be affected towards God? Suppose an officer in the army of a powerful king, who should every day be witness of his grandeur, power, and political sagacity: the proper effects of these being only admiration or fear, he might serve this prince for years without feeling the least love for him. But let him take particular notice of him, promote him, and at all times express an anxious and an affectionate concern for his interest, and, in addition to his admiration of the power and grandeur of his king, a new passion is created in his mind. Conscious of his personal obligations, and of the proofs
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of affection he has received, he loves his monarch, and is ready to sacrifice his life to prove his attachment.

The best informed pagans were ignorant of the anxious and affectionate concern which the Scriptures every where describe God to have for the human species. They knew not that amiable attribute which He was pleased to proclaim of himself when Moses was permitted to see His glory. “ And the
 “ Lord descended in the cloud, and
 “ stood with him there, and pro-
 “ claimed the name of the Lord,
 “ and the Lord passed by before
 “ him, and proclaimed the Lord

“ God, merciful, and gracious, long
 “ suffering, and abundant in good-
 “ ness and truth ; keeping mercy
 “ for thousands, forgiving iniquity,
 “ and transgression, and sin.” They

knew not, that God so loved the
 world that He gave His only be-
 gotten Son, to the end that all that
 believe in Him should not perish,
 but have everlasting life. They
 knew not, that God is a rewarder
 of such as diligently seek Him, that
 He remembereth we are but dust,
 and that He pitieth us as a Father
 doth his children. They knew not
 that, for such as acquire an ardent
 love for Him, from a proper appre-
 hension and consideration of His
 mercy,

mercy, displayed in their creation, preservation, and redemption, there is reserved for them (through their Saviour's merits) an eternity of happiness, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. They knew not that, though we may frequently offend Him, and though our sins may be as red as scarlet, on repentance, amendment, and faith in His Son, He will make them as white as wool. They knew not that, to such as humbly solicit it, He will grant his grace, and send His comforter to take up his abode with them. They knew not, when the mind is torn with affliction,

fiction, that charming consolation which arises from the reflection that the world is governed by an all-merciful and gracious, as well as an almighty God, who can and will, in a future life, abundantly recompense its present sorrows; neither did they know the quiet and peace, the mind receives in its distress, from that consoling address of our blessed Saviour, so full of benignity and condescension, "Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Of these important points of knowledge they were entirely ignorant. Their wisest Philosophers knew not any one of them; yet

yet is there not a peasant in Europe, unless it be his own fault, but may know them (*n*) all. History finely elucidates the difference between the love and attachment shewn to God by pagans, and those who have been favoured with a divine revelation. How many thousand Jews and Christians have evinced their love and zeal for God by suffering death, rather than dishonour Him by profane and idolatrous worship! But what pagan ever did so? (Socrates alone excepted). The Emperor Caligula ordered his statue to be placed in the temple at Jerusalem: but the Jews resisted the order in so determined and intrepid

trepid a manner, as obliged that ferocious prince to abandon his attempt. Yet how tamely did the Emperor Julian, in his own presence, suffer his general Valentinian (a converted pagan, and afterwards Emperor) to strike the High Priest, even at the altar, because he sprinkled Valentinian with unholy water, as Julian was worshipping! And when it was publicly debated in the senate of Rome, whether the Pagan or Christian Religion should prevail, and become the established and national religion, all the senators acquiesced in the will of Theodosius, and abandoned their gods and that religion in which they had been

been educated, without any material effort or struggle.

In this place it may not be improper to pay due homage to the good and brave, as well as wise, Socrates; who, perhaps, was the only pagan that risked, and really lost, his life, for his attachment to God; and because he would not suffer His name to be profaned. Dr. Cudworth, in his Intellectual System, has proved, that the idea of Socrates' suffering death for denying a plurality of Gods is a vulgar error. Like the rest of the literate pagans, he believed in a multiplicity of Deities; at the same time, that he believed all these
Deities,

Deities, as well as men, to be under the absolute controul of one supreme God. Socrates himself informs us, in Plato's Euthyphron, that the reason of his accusation was the free and open manner in which he condemned those traditions concerning the Gods, wherein dishonest and unjust actions were imputed to them. For when Euthyphron accused his own father of murder (in committing an homicide to prison, who happened to die there), and would have justified himself by the example of the Gods, because Jupiter committed his father Saturn to prison for devouring his sons; Socrates thus addresses him: "Is

" not

“ not (*o*) this the very thing, Eu-
 “ thyphron, for which I am ac-
 “ cused ? namely, because when I
 “ hear any one affirming such mat-
 “ ters as these concerning the Gods,
 “ I am very loth to believe them ;
 “ and hesitate not publickly to de-
 “ clare my dislike of them.” The
 zeal of Socrates, and the sublime
 ideas he entertained of God, would
 not suffer him to bear patiently the
 profanation of His name ; he there-
 fore ridiculed and publickly ex-
 pressed his disapprobation of those
 poetick traditions (believed at that
 time by the vulgar) in which all
 manner of unjust and immoral ac-
 tions were imputed to the Godhead.
 Thus

Thus to his zeal and attachment to God (combined with the envy of the sophists) may be ascribed his persecution, and the loss of his life. The unjust death he suffered seems to have been avenged by a particular interference of providence; for very soon after he was poisoned, the Athenians repented their having put to death so innocent and good a character. Their lamentation for his loss was as general, as their condemnation of him had been publick. The schools, and places of exercise, were ordered to be shut; a statue was erected to his memory; his accusers were prosecuted; Melitus was torn in pieces; Anytus was

was expelled from the Heraclea, where he had sheltered himself; all the abettors of the conspiracy against him were looked upon as accursed; and they were reduced to such despair, that many of them were guilty of suicide.

With respect to a future state, when it is considered that the only data on which the pagans could believe in it, were furnished merely by the reason of man, it is not at all surprising that they should have had such confused ideas concerning it as we know they had. In a matter of so abstract and metaphysical a nature, arbitrary and uncertain conclusions only could be drawn

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from such incorrect premises. The reason of man, from observing the mind to be independent of matter, and from other conjectures, asserted this opinion, and assigned some plausible arguments for a belief in it: but the evidence that was, or could be, adduced for the truth was so little, that Bishop Warburton, who collated the opinions of most of the ancient philosophers on this subject, considered Socrates as the only one of them that really believed the immortality of the soul. He was satisfied, that, notwithstanding the legislators of all states promulgated the doctrine of immortality from a conviction of its utility, none
of

of them believed it. A modern writer observes on this subject, " We are sufficiently acquainted
 " with the eminent persons who
 " flourished in the age of Cicero
 " and the first Cæsars, with their
 " actions, their characters, and their
 " motives, to be assured that their
 " conduct in this life was never re-
 " gulated by any serious convictions
 " of the rewards or punishments of
 " a future state." And we are in-
 formed by Sallust, that Julius Cæ-
 far, in an address to the Roman se-
 nate, publicly affirmed, that no
 man of a liberal way of thinking
 believed in it. Now the history of
 our own country, as well as that of

most others, incontestably proves, that men have regulated the most important actions of their lives by the consideration of a future state. Sir Thomas More, in the reign of Henry VIII.; Latimer and Ridley, in that of Queen Mary; and the protesting Bishops in the reign of James II. unquestionably did so: and we are to account for the different ideas men have had on this important subject, from there having been no sufficient evidence of its truth before the promulgation of the Gospel, and quite sufficient since, to convince all candid rational enquirers.

A very remarkable and striking
proof

proof of the force and strength of Christian evidence on this awful point, and of the wonderful effect it is capable of producing on the human mind, was signally instanced in the person of Felix, when St. Paul was brought before him. No one acquainted with the character of Felix can believe that such a man would have trembled, if the orator Tertullus had addressed him on the subjects St. Paul did, and could have united in himself the knowledge of all the heathen poets and philosophers; and could have added to his own the eloquence of all the heathen orators. Felix, I am convinced, would have been

perfectly at his ease; and there would have been no vibration of his nerves, in spite of this consolidated knowledge and blaze of elocution. It was the awful, sublime, and affecting truths, imparted by revelation, that made him tremble; and nothing else.—Cicero alleges, as the chief reason why the pagan philosophers disbelieved a future state, their utter incapacity to form any distinct idea of incorporeity. They saw the body expire, and could not imagine how the soul could exist without it; this was a difficulty mere reason never could unravel: it was an insurmountable stumbling block to the heathens.

Now

Now revelation, by teaching that the body shall rise again with the soul (of which the pagans had not, nor could have, the least conception), solves, with ease and simplicity, this difficult matter : and our Saviour, by a publick exhibition of his own body, thus raised from the dead, and so united, settled this important point in a manner that overthrows all doubt and cavil against it. An elegant writer observes on this subject as follows :

“ Before the world was enlightened
 “ by the beams of revelation, phi-
 “ losophers endeavoured to carry
 “ their views beyond this short
 “ vale of life ; they stood upon

“ the shore, and eyed the immense
 “ ocean of eternity that lay before
 “ them : but clouds and darkness
 “ soon terminated the prospect. The
 “ light of the Gospel happily dis-
 “ pelled those clouds and that dark-
 “ ness, extricated mankind from
 “ the perplexity in which it was
 “ involved, and opened a clear and
 “ luminous view of eternity.” A
 discovery of this instance of the
 great goodness of the Deity to the
 human race, in a full, clear, and am-
 ple manner, was reserved for the
 Son of God. The patriarchs and
 prophets were highly favoured and
 highly inspired ; and we have rea-
 sons to believe they themselves

were

were well assured of a future state : but probably, in the estimation of God, it was too great an honour for any mere human being to communicate this important knowledge, generally, to the world ; it was beyond any degree of inspiration ever conferred on man, even that of the gradus Mosaicus. To inform man that God will allow him, in a future life, the exalted and inconceivable privilege of seeing him face to face, of being continually in his presence, and of living for ever, was intelligence of such heavenly extraction, and of so sublime a nature, as was worthy the Son of God, and of Him only, to whom the Father gave

His

His spirit without measure, to divulge to the world; and for which communication, those men are of opinion they can never be sufficiently thankful, who think on the merciful dealings of God to man; who know the ignorance of the pagan world as to this momentous point, and the increased ratio of their own happiness derived from a knowledge of it.

There are a class of men who assert that a written law, declarative of God's will, is unnecessary; because the intimations of reason and conscience are sufficient to impel men to virtuous, and to restrain them from vicious actions. But the absurdity

furdity of this idea is proved by the practice of all legislators, who have ever considered the licentious passions of men as too strong to be controlled by either reason or conscience; and that nothing but the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward, temporal or eternal, is strong enough to curb them. If mere reason and conscience could have made men in general virtuous, it is natural to suppose the ancient philosophers would have been so: Socrates, Plato, Zeno, and a very few others were; but Aristotle, in his 2d book of Ethics, expressly says, their scholars were not. The major part of these philosophers led the most scandalous

scandalous lives imaginable ; and some of them inculcated the most vicious doctrines : Diogenes, for example, taught that chastity and modesty were weakness of mind ; and himself acted openly in violation of both, with an impudence, that set decency at defiance : and Chrysippus, who was considered as the founder, and most solid support of the Stoicks, allowed of the commission of incest, and composed several works filled with the most shameful obscenities. Without particularizing any more, whoever reads Diogenes Laertius will there find an ample relation of the lewdness and unnatural vices of these
philoso-

philosophers: and Cicero, in his Tusculan Questions, observes as follows: “ Do you think that these
 “ things (meaning the precepts of
 “ morality) had any influence on
 “ those men (excepting only a very
 “ few of them) who taught, and
 “ wrote, and disputed about them?
 “ No. Who is there of all the phi-
 “ losophers, whose mind, and life,
 “ and manners were conformable
 “ to right reason? Who ever made
 “ his philosophy to be the law and
 “ rule of his life, and not a mere
 “ boast and shew of his wit and
 “ parts? Who of them hath ob-
 “ served his own instructions, and
 “ lived in obedience to his own pre-
 “ cepts?

"cepts? On the contrary, many
 "of them were slaves to filthy lusts,
 "many to pride, many to covet-
 "ousness, &c." But even allow-
 ing every advantage to this idea,
 that the suggestions of reason and
 conscience are sufficient in great
 and strong cases of moral conduct,
 they are certainly in many very im-
 portant ones insufficient; and may
 be so over-ruled by education, and
 other causes, as to suggest a crimi-
 nal, instead of a laudable, career of
 action. For example, God requires
 nothing more peremptorily from
 man, than that he should love mer-
 cy; that he should feed the hun-
 gry, clothe the naked, and relieve
 his

his neighbour's distress. And from the letter, as well as from the spirit of our Saviour's doctrine, we are informed, that every man's conduct in these particulars will be enquired into at the day of judgment; and that the best defence he will be able at that time to make, will be grounded on his having exercised, whilst on earth, this godlike attribute of mercy. For this refinement of our nature, we are wholly indebted to revealed religion. The dictates of nature, the laws of morality, or the best systems of moral philosophy, give but gross and imperfect definitions of mercy, and as imperfect directions concerning
the

the exercise of it. They may be compared to a coarse medicine, which affects only the larger organs; whilst the doctrines of revealed religion operate in a very different manner. Their influence extends not only to our actions, but likewise to our words; and they require us to preserve purity in our most secret and retired thoughts. They not only act on the larger organs, but they penetrate the nerves, affect the finest fibres of the heart, and fulfil God's promise of putting His law in the mind of man. The most enlightened pagans, in the most enlightened age, instead of considering the heavenly attribute
of

of compassion as a perfection of the mind, considered it as a great weakness. Cicero and Seneca will, I presume, be allowed to have had consciences as well informed, as much refined, and as susceptible, as any of the heathens: yet the former expressly affirms, that pity is a weakness of the mind, arising from the view of another person's misery—

Misericordia est ægritudo animi ex alienis rebus adversis. Tuf. Dis. lib. iv. And that by *ægritudo* he meant a disorder, a wrong state of the mind, is plain from another passage, where he says, *ægritudo est animi adversante ratione contractio*: (p) and speaking in his Tuf-

culan Questions of the gladiatorial shews, he is at a loss to determine whether they were, or were not, cruel. Seneca expresses himself still stronger, affirming that none but base tempers are susceptible of pity, and that it is the vice of a pusillanimous spirit; *Misericordiam omnes boni vitabunt, est enim vitium pusilli animi.* Sen. de Clem. lib. ii. In the Grecian and Roman histories, we find numerous publick instances of cruelty, but none of mercy that did not proceed from the interested views of individuals. And as the civil economy of these people is more particularly detailed than that of any other

other that ever lived, we should have been informed of any of their humane establishments, had any ever existed. None of their historians tell us that there ever was an hospital or an alms-house in Rome, or Athens: but they inform us of gladiatorial shews, exhibited, not only on great, but on the most trivial occasions; in which on an average thirty thousand men were annually supposed to be slain, for the sport and amusement of the most enlightened people then living. In these exhibitions, it is remarked, that the Roman ladies took more delight than even the men. They inform us, that multitudes of children

dren were annually exposed by the
 Romans to perish by hunger and
 the inclemency of the weather.
 They inform us, that Roman no-
 bles made no scruple, when their
 slaves were old and past service, to
 order their being left to starve on
 an island in the Tiber. A revela-
 tion of the will of God, expressive
 of His abhorrence of inhumanity,
 was necessary to correct such fla-
 gitious instances of cruelty; and
 it did correct them: for when the
 Roman Emperors became Chris-
 tians, they prohibited all these
 savage enormities, which doubtless
 would otherwise have continued to
 this time; as the exposition of
 children

children still does in the empire of China, where the Christian religion does not prevail. The French nation is at this moment an astonishing witness, as well as a strong confirmation, of the reasonableness of this ^{influence} ~~influence~~. For having set God at defiance, and rejected the religion of Christ, do we not see the standard of cruelty erected in every part of that wretched and devoted kingdom? Are there not the same bloody proscriptions, and is there not the same or worse tyranny than ever disgraced the sanguinary reigns of Nero or Caracalla?

In a former argument it was en-

deavoured to prove, from the ignorance of the pagans with respect to God's attribute of goodness, and of their personal obligations to Him, that they had no love to God. In this a similar attempt is made to prove they had no charity to man, at least that they did not consider it as an obligatory duty. Thus to the various other advantages of a revealed religion, is to be wholly attributed that benevolence, or good will, to the human species, which throws an angelick lustre over the character of every human being, that will admit its amiable and benign influence.

The next argument I have to
advance,

advance, for the necessity of Revelation, is, the entire ignorance of the heathen world as to the nature of true ambition, or of the utmost possible excellency to which the human species is permitted to aspire. Before the promulgation of the Gospel, the object of human ambition was almost universally agreed by kings and princes to consist in worldly splendour, in conquest, and martial glory, the pursuit of which, if it did not militate against the honour and mercy of God, it certainly did against the happiness of man. Revelation corrects this grand and fundamental error, by informing mankind of

the nature of true glory. "Thus
 "saith the Lord, let not the wise
 "man glory in his wisdom, neither
 "let the mighty man glory in his
 "might; let not the rich man
 "glory in his riches: but let him
 "that glorieth, glory in this, that
 "he understandeth and knoweth
 "me, that I am the Lord, which ex-
 "ercise loving kindness, judgment,
 "and righteousness in the earth, for
 "in these things I delight." Reve-
 lation evinces its heavenly nature and
 extraction by its sublime intelligence,
 and by the way in which it defines
 ambition. It informs us that its pro-
 per object is indeed a superior sta-
 tion, but a superior station not in
 this

this life, but in the next; that it consists in the promotion, not in the destruction, of the welfare of mankind. Instead of assigning the post of honour to that warlike ambition, whose destructive agents are the raging fire and unrelenting sword, the mild doctrines of the religion of Christ assign it to those who promote peace, who avoid every species of oppression, who visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, who relieve the distressed, who feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and cultivate in their breasts an universal love to mankind. Nor is it at all wonderful, that a good and gracious God should

should assign this amiable and in-
 offensive career to man, as it di-
 rectly and immediately seconds the
 views of His providence, which
 has ever for its object the promo-
 tion of man's essential happiness.
 However this definition of the na-
 ture of ambition may create a
 smile in the features of a warrior
 or a statesman, when coolly and
 dispassionately examined, either by
 the page of history, the practice of
 real life, the dictates of humanity
 and virtue, or the uninfluenced rea-
 son of man, it will be found as
 agreeable to all these as it is to the
 word of God. Thus as God was
 pleased by the Mosaick dispensa-
 tion

tion to correct the false ideas of man respecting theology, by the Gospel He has been pleased to correct his false ideas of true glory; and as by the Mosaick revelation he was informed of the excellency of his nature, by the intelligence that he was created in the image of God, by the Gospel he is graciously informed to what end and object that excellency may aspire; no less than to eternal life, to glory, honour, and immortality. As such a glorious destiny is offered to the ambition of man, it seems perfectly inconsistent with, and absolutely contrary to, the very nature of this soaring passion, to be content with
a little

a little prize, when it may obtain a great one; to be content with that which is mundane and temporary, when it is allowed the privilege of aspiring to that which is celestial and immortal. More especially, when, from the authority of Scripture, it may be affirmed, that there will be a distinction of station, in a future life, as well as in this. Indeed it seems impossible to imagine that there will be a perfect equality of station in heaven. Such an idea is neither agreeable to reason, nor to the word of God: for the former suggests that whatever motives induce God to reward man at all, the same motives will induce

induce Him to decree that reward in proportion to his virtue and holiness; and the latter precisely and particularly confirms this, our Saviour declaring, that in his Father's house there are many mansions; that he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward: Likewise "I say unto
 " you, among them that are born
 " of women, there hath not risen a
 " greater than John the Baptist;
 " notwithstanding, he that is least
 " in the kingdom of heaven is
 " greater

“greater than he.” There are several other texts to the same purport, which expressly assert a disparity of rank in heaven. Our station therefore in a future life will be precisely in proportion to our degree of excellence in the discharge of our duty in this; a destiny equally agreeable to reason, justice, and revelation: the consideration of which ought to encircle and sink deep into the heart of every rational being.

This scriptural idea of ambition is heavenly and sublime. It hath for its object the aspiring to the favour of God, by promoting the welfare of man. It accordingly
 proposes

proposes the noblest end, to be pursued by the noblest means. In it there is neither vanity, vexation, nor disappointment; which cannot justly be said of any other. Indeed, it may be truly affirmed, that all other ambition, when compared with this, is vain and frivolous, temporary and perishable; and is neither the proper object, nor worthy the dignity of man's nature, to set his heart on. From the obscure and imperfect knowledge of the pagans, both of the will of God and of a future state, they could not possibly have entertained just notions of true ambition; nor could it ever have been known
by

by man, unless it had been revealed to him: accordingly it is among the strong reasons for the expediency and necessity of Revelation. Though the present race of kings may be acquainted with the nature of true ambition, in their practice and pursuit of it, most of them act on pagan, rather than on Christian principles, and, as Dr. Clarke observes, in one of his Sermons, do not seem so anxious to imitate God in His attribute of goodness, which they might do to a great degree, as to imitate that of His power, which they cannot do in any degree. Our Sovereign however is wholly exempt
from

from any imputation of this kind ; as he gives every possible proof of acting on real Christian principles. Indeed he is a splendid example to other monarchs, of the manner in which they ought to reign, to promote and preserve the happiness of mankind. The universal love of his subjects so frequently and so strongly displayed, at the same time that it marks the goodness of his heart, and the wisdom of his conduct, is a just criterion, and a national appeal, to prove that what is advanced is not adulation, but strict and impartial truth. As to mere human ambition, by which I particularly and exclusively mean,

self-aggrandizement at all hazards and events, it is in every respect directly the reverse of that before described: instead of being heavenly and sublime, it is always base, and frequently diabolical; it has for its object the promotion of its own selfish and nefarious views, at the expense of every duty, moral and religious; there being no affection so tender, no promise so solemn, no engagement so obligatory, no duty so sacred, that it will not violate, nor any crime so black, that it will not perpetrate, to accomplish its purpose. Accordingly, it meditates the basest and most selfish ends, which it is prepared to pursue

purſue by the moſt criminal means. In it there is uſually vexation, diſgrace, and remorse. And of all the depraved paſſions of the human heart, there is none productive of more miſery to the individual, or more extenſive miſchief to ſociety ; nor is there any character ſo dangerous in a ſtate, as a man of political conſequence, whoſe ruling paſſion is that of ſelf aggrandiſement at all events. (q)

The laſt argument I have to urge under this propoſition, is, that the juſtice of God is evidently concerned in an explicit revelation of His will to mankind. Man being endued with a faculty of wor-
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ſhipping

shipping his Creator, nothing seems more agreeable to his reason, or to the majesty and dignity of God, than that this awful and sublime service should be performed in spirit and in truth. It has been already endeavoured to assign reasons why the pagans never did, nor could worship God in this manner. The finite reason of man neither could discover such a mode of worship as was consonant to the pure, holy, and infinite nature of God; nor could it discover many of the personal obligations he is under to that gracious and almighty Being, which form the true basis of man's love and attachment to Him.

Him. Both these he only learns from revelation; consequently, if God requires man to worship Him in spirit and in truth, which He does, and man can neither discover the manner nor the motives of such worship sufficiently from his own reason, the justice of God is concerned in furnishing him with means to accomplish the end He expects him to perform. Another reason, which shews that the justice of God is implicated in a revelation of His will, is His having been pleased to place man in this world in a probationary state, and decreed that he shall hereafter be brought to trial at God's tribunal,

and there made to give account of his words and actions. God has been pleased to furnish the brute creation with an unerring instinct for the performance of such actions as He requires from them: this instinct being incompatible with man's free agency, the justice of God is concerned in providing him with a knowledge of His will equally infallible, which He has graciously condescended to do by His Scriptures. This instance of God's justice and mercy to man was absolutely necessary; but the display of it, though in the highest degree gracious, is not at all wonderful. We are informed that the
 pure

pure and holy doctrines of the Gospel are ultimately to prevail in the uttermost parts of the earth, and that the Christian religion is finally to become that of the whole human race. Upon this principle, a revelation and a religion proceeding from God appear indispensably necessary ; because the passions of men would never have permitted them to form a pure and holy religion, even if their reason had been capable of doing so. And were it possible to suppose that a pure religion could be formed in one quarter of the globe, such are the pride of man, the influence of education, and the force of habit

and custom, that it is not possible to suppose the inhabitants of the other three quarters would agree or conform to it. It was therefore necessary that a system of religion, suited to all ages, countries, and degrees of men, should be dictated by, and proceed from God; for otherwise it is inconceivable that one and the same religion should ever prevail universally. By the Scriptures of God, man is amply informed of every thing necessary to secure his salvation, and of all those points of duty, on the performance or neglect of which he will hereafter be tried. In this view of man's destiny, an express and particular

ticular revelation of the will of
 God appears so indispensably, so
 unavoidably necessary, that, con-
 sistently with our ideas of God's at-
 tribute of justice, it is impossible to
 conceive that without it there can
 be a day of judgment, the very na-
 ture of all judgment presupposing
 a previous definition of duty, agree-
 ably to the observation of St. Paul,
 "I had not known sin, but by the
 "law; for I had not known lust,
 "except the law had said, Thou
 "shalt not covet." The written
 law of the Gospel is the standard
 by which all men, to whom it has
 been revealed, will doubtless here-
 after be tried. By which mode,

at

at the same time that man will be precluded from pleading ignorance of his duty, he will be constrained to acknowledge the justice of God's conduct in having been graciously pleased to define what He expects man to perform, in characters so clear, perspicuous and unequivocal, that, unless wilfully, it is impossible he should mistake them.

PROPOSITION III.

It is attempted in this proposition to prove, that, notwithstanding the imperfect practice of its doctrines, revelation has been the direct and immediate cause of giving glory to God in the highest,
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and of communicating peace and good-will to man.

Though the incredulity of some men, and the vanity, ignorance, and immorality of others, may induce them to deny the truth of the Scriptures, it is however fully ascertained by the nature of the information they communicate, which it is quite beyond the utmost stretch of man's understanding to have reached, though his essential happiness depended on his possessing it. Revelation is proved to be true by prophecies and miracles; by the resurrection of Christ, by the peculiarity of its doctrines, and

and by the great effect of those doctrines on the human mind; which have this mark in common with all the works of God, in contradistinction to those of man, that the more they are studied, and the more intensely they are investigated, the more perfect they appear, and the more they become the just object of our admiration. Grotius observes very sagaciously, that, it was not the intention of God that the principles of revealed religion should have the highest degree of evidence of which a thing is susceptible, an evidence so strong as to overthrow or silence every specious objection; but only enough to satisfy

satisfy and convince a wise and honest man, who, without prejudice or pride, in the integrity of his heart, seeks the truth, and has no other object, when it is found, than to follow and obey its dictates. If the evidence of religion had been as clear as the sun at noon day, where would have been the value or excellency of faith, which is an affection God requires to exist in the heart of man? and so much does He require it, that, without it, He has expressly declared it impossible to please Him. In this respect God demands no more from mankind than they do from each other, in
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all the social relations of life. Even a servant is justly offended with unreasonable distrust, and, without mentioning the closer connections of life, such as those of husband and wife, father and son, what is so offensive to a man of any honour as to doubt his word? And since God gives so many visible proofs of His power, wisdom, and goodness, and all these are displayed in the revelation of His will to man, since God is a God of truth, to doubt His word is to offer Him a great and unpardonable insult. As the Scriptures proceed from God, they proceed from an infinite nature, and therefore they must partake

take of that nature, and, like all other things which proceed from Him, be in some parts incomprehensible to man, there being no one thing proceeding from God in the whole creation which the reason of man perfectly comprehends. The ablest natural philosopher may be puzzled in the second question by the most illiterate person. So unhappily indeed do the minds of some men appear to be biaſſed, that, whilst they aſcribe their diſbelief of the Chriſtian religion to its myſteries, thoſe very men, if there were nothing myſterious in it, would be the firſt to aſſign that as an equal reaſon for their unbelief. They
would

would then affirm that there was nothing in the Scriptures which bore the stamp of God, or that was at all superior to the composition of man. It should, however, always be remembered by them, that there is no mystery in revelation for which God has not condescended to assign some reason to man. God the Father is denominated in the Scriptures his Creator, God the Son his Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost his Sanctifier and Comforter. Thus man is informed of his personal obligations to each Person in the Trinity. As to the union of the two natures of God and man, it is a mystery superior

rior to the comprehension of human understanding: but still a reason is assigned for it, namely, that otherwise mankind could never have received God's pardon, or have partaken of everlasting happiness. Now when it is considered how many millions of human beings will enjoy an eternity of happiness in consequence of this union, who shall presume to set bounds to the infinite mercy of either the Father or the Son, or say, these things cannot be true, when the Word of God affirms they are so? Further, since it was the pleasure of God to reveal His will to man, certainly His doing so by His Son was the most

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powerful and irresistible way, and the one that suited best with His own dignity. Man is declared to be an accountable being; and, upon that principle, as I have before observed, there must be a standard by which judgment is to proceed, and by which it is to be ascertained. The Scriptures are that standard. If it be alledged that reason is sufficient to teach man a proper manner of worshipping God, or to discover spiritual truth, history proves that it is not, by the idolatrous worship and by the spiritual ignorance of all ranks of men previous to revelation. It may with propriety be contended, that

that the reason of man is sufficient for his conduct in temporal matters : but no one, whose opinion is worth attending to, can possibly maintain, that it is in spiritual ones. Socrates, whose reason was probably as strong as that of most modern sceptics, particularly and expressly declares it is not sufficient. In his second Dialogue with Alcibiades, Socrates observes to him, that Minerva is represented in Homer as scattering the mist that covered the eyes of Diomedes, and prevented him from distinguishing God from man. Thus says he, “ It is necessary that God “ should, in the first place, disperse
 from

“the darkness which at present
 “covers your soul, and afterwards
 “apply the means by which you
 “may be able to distinguish what
 “is evil and what is good; for at
 “present you are incapable of
 “doing so.” Plato Alcib. II.

It is objected against the Christian
 Religion, that its truths are only
 known in a small part of the globe.
 The arts and sciences are equally
 confined to that small part of the
 globe; but no one, I believe, ob-
 jects to their truth on that account.
 It is sufficient that the Scriptures
 have been read, and studied, and
 their truth rigidly examined, by
 the most enlightened men in the
 most

most enlightened part of the world; not only by the clergy, but by Grotius, Pascal, Locke, Newton, Addison, Milton, Boyle, Bacon, and Selden, all laymen; each of them distinguished for learning and genius, and in acuteness of intellect not yet surpassed by any men that have been born; and that these have respectively by their writings borne testimony to their truth. Considering the characters of these men, their superior degree of natural intellect, and the high improvement of that intellect, their firm and unshaken belief in the religion of Christ, after their strict and severe examination of it, is

such a proof of its truth, that if all the inhabitants of Asia, Africa, and South America were to disbelieve it, still it would remain undiminished; for in the investigation and determination of truth, the authority of such competent judges is of infinitely greater weight and consequence, than that of all the collective unlettered men in those regions. It is sufficient to satisfy a candid mind, that the truth of the Scriptures has been proved by those great luminaries in theological literature, Stillingfleet, Cudworth, Hoadley, Sherlock, Butler, Jenkin, Clarke, Doddridge, and many other eminent

nent men of the last and present century, whose evidence in favour of Christianity, however it may be disputed, will, I am convinced, never be vanquished. Further, it is a practical proof of the truth of Christianity, that it is admitted and its doctrines practised by most men of worth in this country, and in Switzerland; where, I am persuaded, the moral and religious character of man is exhibited in higher perfection, liberty better ascertained, understood, and practised, and the intellectual powers of the mind more improved, than elsewhere.

To the truth of Christianity it is

opposed, that the Mahometan religion prevails in a much greater ratio, and is much more generally practised. This objection has virtually been answered already; for probably, out of those numerous tribes of men who profess Mahometanism, not one in ten thousand can read; printing being prohibited by the Koran: and if they could, their ignorance and the unimproved state of their minds is such, that either their assent or dissent is not of the least consequence to the credibility of the Gospel. Besides, whatever there is of worth in the Koran, it is well known, is extracted either from the

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Mosaick or Christian dispensations. Further, the Mahometan religion may be permitted to prevail for some time among so ignorant and rude a people, as their minds may not be sufficiently improved to receive the truths of the Gospel; especially, as wherever the Mahometan religion is admitted, it abolishes idolatry, which is one great preparatory step to the future introduction of the Gospel. Among other frivolous objections against revelation, it has been remarked, that Moses inculcates false notions of astronomy. As to all such objections, they are completely answered by Mr. Pascal, who observes,

serves, that in the revelation of His will to mankind, God's intentions were not so much to improve the understanding of man, that being already sufficiently perfect, as to sway and influence his will, and to correct and amend his heart; and that when it effects this, its purpose is accomplished: that therefore the Scriptures are not to be considered as intermeddling or interfering at all with human science. The astronomy of Moses was adapted to the comprehension and gross ideas of his hearers. If he had given them a philosophical account of the solar system, he would have acted absurdly, and probably would
not

nor have been believed: but most likely he himself knew nothing of this system; for though he was inspired as to spiritual matters, it does not follow, nor was it at all necessary, that he should have been so with respect to human science.

Another objection, but of no more real weight than the last, is, that before the promulgation of the Gospel, the Roman Empire arrived at the highest summit of glory, power, and splendour, and produced men of the most exalted characters, who seem to have enjoyed as much happiness as any people have since done, who have been favoured with the advantages
 10. of

of revelation. No one can deny that the power of the Romans was enormous: but ancient history and modern times incontestibly prove, that the happiness of any people depends no further on their power, than, as that power exists in a sufficient degree to repel insult or invasion; all beyond this is perhaps only a snare to any state. Indeed, so far is the existence or welfare of a state from depending on inordinate power, that such inordinate power has ever been the fundamental cause of the destruction of all the great monarchies that ever yet existed; and it is universally agreed to have been so
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of the Roman. The splendour of the Romans in their publick buildings, their sacrifices, their temples, their triumphs, feasts, &c. it must be allowed, was very great: but the real welfare of a people is not in the least concerned or connected with these things. As a striking proof that it is not, no people, I believe it will be admitted, ever enjoyed more happiness in former times, than the inhabitants of the little commonwealths of Greece; nor do any in modern ones than the inhabitants of the Swiss cantons. This superior happiness is not to be ascribed to power or splendour, for they cannot pretend to either;

either, it is to be attributed, to what will make any nation or any people happy and respected at all times; it is to be imputed to the rulers in each state acting faithfully by each other, and in their respective engagements with foreign powers; in the higher classes men spending their time in the improvement of their minds, and in endeavouring to promote the public good and their own eternal interests; and in the lower classes being honest, frugal, and industrious; in short, by a general determination of the whole people to study to be quiet and to mind their own business. (r) The happiness of
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the Romans does not seem to have been so great when Rome was considered mistress of the world, as in the virtuous period of the commonwealth, when, it is readily acknowledged, there appeared many very noble and exalted characters. Therefore their happiness was not caused by their splendour or power, but was in proportion to their virtue; which will ever be the case: for, in spite of all the subtle political maxims of Machiavel, the throne is established by righteousness. The French nation, better than all the books in the world, practically prove the folly and futility of his theory, and that it is
not

not to be established by wickedness, as he in many places directly, and everywhere indirectly, inculcates (s). History proves how little connection there is between greatness and happiness: and as to the Romans, how was it possible that people could be happy, who were addicted to all manner of sensual vices; who were of so restless and ambitious a disposition, that they were at war for the astonishing period of seven hundred years, with only three intervals of peace; whose emperors were usually slain or poisoned, reigning so insecurely, that, out of fifty-seven successive ones from Julius Cæsar to Augustus,

tulus, thirty-eight were murdered, only nineteen dying naturally; in a state where it was commonly the custom, upon the elevation of a new emperor, to kill all the friends and relations of his predecessor; where their minds were so ill regulated, that mothers could desert and expose to death their helpless offspring, noblemen could inhumanly starve their old faithful servants; and where both men and women were of so cruel a temper, that they considered men's slaying each other on a publick theatre, as the first and greatest amusement they could partake of. Not to mention how much their happiness must have
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been narrowed by their ignorance of astronomy, geography, and experimental philosophy, the use of the compass, optical glasses, and the art of printing, how comfortless must even a good man have been, in extreme adversity, or on a sick bed, deprived of the hope or consolation arising from the expectation of a future life? Therefore neither during life, nor at the hour of death, was their happiness in any sort of proportion equal to that mankind have enjoyed since the promulgation of the Gospel.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the progress of genuine Christianity has been the idolatry of the Romish church;

church; which in some instances is of a ranker sort than any that ever prevailed in Greece or Rome: for no Roman or Grecian presumed to intrude into the seat of their God omnipotent, and to call himself infallible, or was guilty of such abominable blasphemy as to pretend to remit sin for a pecuniary consideration. Its saint worship (*t*), purgatory, confession, and prohibition to the laity to read the scriptures, have likewise greatly prevented the progress of real Christianity in that part of the world, where otherwise it would probably have flourished in a high degree. But, notwithstanding the hypocrisy and vi-

cious passions of men, and the various other impediments that have obstructed the real genuine profession and progress of the religion of Christ, it shall now be my endeavour to prove, that it has been the efficient cause of giving glory to God, and of communicating peace and good will to man. On the birth of Christ the heavenly Host declared it should do this; and where its doctrines have been received and practised, this it hath done.

To have a proper idea of the manner in which the Gospel has promoted the glory of God, the former worship of the Heathens must

must be contrasted with that of a Christian: Figure to yourself such acts of adoration as the Canaanite sacrificing to Devils, and casting his child into the fiery image of his idol Moloch; the Egyptian worshipping the bull Apis; the ungrateful and insensible Jew dancing round the golden Calf; the sanguinary altar of the Greek smoaking with human gore; the impious and profane Roman adoring as God that bloody and impure monster Caracalla; and then see Latimer, Ridley, Tillotson, Doddridge, Secker, and thousands of the clergy and laity of this country, who kneel before the altar of God,

and, with genuine piety and humility, acknowledge they possess no faculty of body or mind, which they did not receive from His gracious and bountiful hand, and confessing they would have been as the dust on which they walk, if it had not pleased Him to call them into being; that it is entirely to His spontaneous goodness they are indebted for happiness temporal or eternal, for health of body or peace of mind in this life, and for all hope or expectation of felicity in the next. Consciousness, not only of their imbecility and insignificance, but of their natural depravity, corrects and prevents on one hand all
 pride

pride of heart, and prepares their mind for humble prayer: on the other, it is prepared for the praise of God by consideration, and reflection on His transcendent mercy, shewn in their creation, preservation, and redemption, in the promises He has been pleased to make of favouring them with his grace, of comforting them under affliction, of not suffering them to be tempted beyond a power of escaping the temptation, and finally of allotting an immortal and ever enduring happiness, through Christ's merits, to such as diligently seek him. The humble and sincere worship of

a being, whose mind is thus illumined by the truths of revelation, is as much superior to any heathen worship, as probably that of an angel may be to his worship. In a proper and abstract sense it is not possible to suppose that the glory of God can receive addition by the worship of man : but in a relative sense it may ; and in this last sense it must surely be allowed, that the Gospel, freeing men's minds from the fetters of polytheism, idolatry, and superstition, and enabling them to worship God in spirit and in truth, has been actually and immediately the cause of giving glory to
 God

God in the highest, as far as it is possible for a human creature to do so.

The doctrines of the Gospel have been equally effective in communicating peace to the mind of man; of the truth of which, I am convinced, all those are sufficiently sensible, who believe in them, and have tried their influence. So extremely powerful are they in calming anguish and distress of mind, that there is just reason, from history and the practical experience of man, to aver, that they are capable of disarming the point and blunting the edge of the acutest and most agonizing affliction that can possibly

sibly befall a human being. Nor is it at all wonderful they should possess this power; for, do they not inform us, that this world is governed by an all-merciful as well as an all-wise Being, whose ways, indeed, are not as our ways, and whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, but who has the happiness of His creatures in view, must know the best way to promote it, and, though He has declared that whom He loveth He chasteneth, He has equally been pleased to declare, that all things shall ultimately work together for good to those that love Him; and who has promised to be a rewarder of those
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that will diligently seek Him. Can any one possibly doubt whether He that made the eye can see ; or He that made the ear can hear ? or can any one question His power either to save, destroy, or relieve as He pleases ? From the consideration therefore of the short-sightedness of man, and his ignorance, whether what He deplores as an affliction may not ultimately be for his benefit, and from the consideration of the great love and mercy which God has declared He bears to the human race, and His irresistible power to accomplish whatever He purposes—from these considerations, which are suggested to
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the reason of man by revealed religion, the mind is relieved, calmed, and becomes resigned and tranquil, under any and every misfortune that can assault it.

As to the supposition that it is derogatory to the majesty and omnipotence of God to attend to, or to interfere with, the low concerns and conduct of man, the idea is of heathenish extraction. It is against both the letter and spirit of revelation; and, if admitted, at the same time that it would diminish our ideas of God's mercy and goodness, it would not at all increase our ideas of his power; it being a greater act of omnipotence to govern and to attend

attend to all things in the universe, than only to certain things in it. In the enumeration of the advantages man derives from revelation, it is impossible not to remark the superiority in the terms of peace and happiness held out to man by revealed religion over those offered to Him by any worldly system whatever. This latter may propose many schemes of sensuality and dissipation to those who are in high health and prosperity: but what does it propose to its votaries, when sick and in adversity? Like a false friend, it then deserts him. At the critical hour of distress, and when assistance is most required, it affords

affords him no consolation; the companions of his prosperity then forsake him, the world triumphs over him, heaven frowns upon him, and his own heart condemns him. In experimental philosophy, when the end is not produced by the means, we always suspect there is an error somewhere; and since all mere worldly systems of happiness, by the confession of those who have tried them, do not accomplish their purpose, if we will act rationally, we ought on that account to discard them, and try some other plan. Revelation offers another and a better, professing that its ways are ways of pleasantness, and that all
its

its paths are peace. It sets before us a system extremely favourable to the pursuits of all rational men, favourable to all pleasures of an intellectual nature, and which allows of those of sense within the reasonable bounds of moderation and innocence; a system by which we may obtain peace of mind, and acquire the esteem and good-will of the worthy part of our species, secure the favour of God, and obtain immortal happiness. If we confine our views merely to this life, what is it, as the pious Burnet observes, in his Theory of the Earth, “ but a
 “ circulation of little mean actions?
 “ We lie down, and rise again, dress,
 “ and

“ and undress, feed and wax hungry,
 “ work, or play, and are weary;
 “ and then we lie down, and the
 “ circle returns. We spend the day
 “ in trifles; and when the night
 “ comes, we throw ourselves into
 “ the bed of folly, amongst dreams,
 “ and broken thoughts, and wild
 “ imaginations: our reason lies
 “ asleep by us, and we are for the
 “ time as arrant brutes as those
 “ that sleep in the stalls or in the
 “ field. Are not the capacities of
 “ man higher than these? and
 “ ought not his ambition and ex-
 “ pectations to be greater? Let us
 “ be adventurers for another world;
 “ ’tis at least a fair, and noble
 “ chance;

“ chance; and there is nothing in
 “ this worth our thoughts, or our
 “ passions: if we should be disap-
 “ pointed, we are still no worse than
 “ the rest of our fellow mortals :
 “ and if we succeed in our expect-
 “ tations, we are eternally happy.”

Another eminent superiority in
 the system of human happiness sug-
 gested by revelation over every
 worldly system, is, that (as far as it
 is yet possible to be proved) it ac-
 complishes its pretensions, because
 its end and its means always cor-
 respond, and are never at variance;
 and as this hath not been accom-
 plished by any system devised by
 the reason of man, revelation was

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necessary to point out the means of peace and happiness to each individual, by informing him of their constituent parts, and of the course of life in which they were to be obtained. The religion of Christ has been equally successful in promoting the publick peace of mankind. Before its mild and inoffensive doctrines prevailed, the human species were chiefly either warriors, or wanderers, like the present Arabs and Tartars. These new doctrines of peace, so evidently connected with the happiness of man, being equally received by the barbarous Goth or Scythian, by Attila and Odoacer, as well as by the polished Roman,
detached

detached the inhabitants of Europe from their eternal pursuit of war, and inclined them to a settled residence. Its gentle and benevolent influence still increasing, and its useful and beneficial effect to society being more and more felt, by degrees the princes of the modern world were led by it to the idea of establishing that famous balance of power, which keeps themselves in awe, and the world in order (*u*). So that though, since that establishment, there have been wars enough, and more than enough; yet there have likewise been long intervals of peace in every nation in Europe; which has allowed that leisure and quiet (formerly denied)

to philosophers, to investigate and improve those arts and sciences, which contribute to the welfare, and do so much honour to the intellect, of man. As an obvious proof how much more peaceable mankind have been, in consequence of the establishment of Christianity, there have been few wars since that period, that have lasted between any of the contending powers longer than from ten to twenty years, a peace succeeding which continued probably nearly as long: whereas, from the foundation of Rome to the battle of Actium, a period of rather more than seven hundred years, the Romans were perpetually

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at war, with only three intermissions; the temple of Janus having been only three times shut in so many centuries.

It is now incumbent on me to prove, that the Christian Religion has been productive of good will, as well as of peace, to man. And here it may justly give every native of this favoured isle pleasure to reflect that the strongest mark of it, that has been ever given by man to man, since the creation, may with truth be selected from this kingdom. The natives of other countries have excelled as well as ourselves in science and in war: but what country but this encircles in

its benevolent and charitable arms, every poor, naked, and hungry person within its confines? What nation but England has, or, since the earth's circuit round the sun, ever had, an establishment by law for a constant and permanent relief of its poor? This may be termed the triumph of Christianity, the most glorious and splendid effect of it ever yet displayed on earth, and is beyond all comparison the brightest emanation of human perfection that was ever exhibited to the world. It accomplishes, in so bold and masterly a manner, the express will of God, and carries human excellence to so very high a pitch, that,
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without the least hyperbole, it is a fit object for the observation and admiration of angels, that so fallen, so selfish an animal as man should ever have meditated, established, and never discontinued for above two hundred years, so disinterested, so godlike an institution; one, that, having for its object the constant feeding, clothing, and relieving, millions from want and distress, is a direct and immediate draught from the providence of God Himself; and, without all doubt, is the closest and exactest copy of it, the world ever yet beheld (*w*). Thus the religion of Christ has been the actual and positive cause of giving

glory to God in the highest, and of communicating peace and good-will to man.

In this essay it was intended to prove that a discovery of the will of God to man was essentially necessary for the vindication of the honour of God's name, and for the promotion of man's happiness. The following is a recapitulation of the arguments employed for that purpose. By revelation, a senseless, impious idolatry has been abolished, and a sublime mode of adoration prescribed, by which man is admitted to an awful intercourse with God, and is empowered to worship Him in spirit and in truth;
 motives

motives are suggested to the mind of man sufficiently strong to engender a real trust and confidence in God, and personal obligations are pointed out, of a nature to create in his mind a real genuine love for Him. Man is thereby informed of his origin and probationary state, and of that glorious destiny, which, if it is not his own fault, will, through his Saviour's merits, be hereafter awarded him. By revelation he is furnished with solid motives and reasons to love mercy, and to shew it on all proper occasions to his fellow creature; every intemperate and impure, every barbarous and cruel passion is reprobated,

probated, every generous one enjoined. By its doctrine of a future state, and of the rewards and punishments of that state, revelation has placed in the mind of man, a counterpoise sufficiently powerful to curb and depress his bad passions, and has suggested motives strong enough to impel into action his good ones; those finer virtues of the human soul connected with love to God, and benevolence to man, which previous to revelation lay there dormant and inactive (*x*). Thus all essential knowledge, and all essential excellence in man's character, is derived from revelation, and may be fairly and truly ascribed to its influence,

fluence, doctrines and injunctions. However some may cavil at the Scriptures, they cannot deny that we are indebted to them for all the sublime and important data I have mentioned; and as all these redound to the honour of God, and to the welfare of man, no one who considers God as gracious and merciful, as well as omnipotent, can rationally maintain that the revelation of His will, which we possess, is unworthy the majesty of God, or that it is any imputation on the most improved reason of man to believe in it. Indeed, how wonderfully has the orbit of man's reason been enlarged and extended by revelation!

revelation! Instead of its being confined to the narrow revolution of this little planet, the sublime intelligence she derives from the religion of Christ enables her to soar a celestial flight, to ascend to heaven itself. She is even invited by it to approach the throne of God, and is suffered to contemplate at present that exquisite happiness, which, through Christ's merits, she will hereafter for ever enjoy from a vision of God's presence, and from being permitted to witness the manifestation and display of his goodness, wisdom, and greatness, in the government of the universe. In this manner is the reason of man improved

improved and exalted by revelation; and in what nobler employment can her faculties possibly be engaged, than in that which revealed religion suggests and recommends—an employment, which has for its SUBJECT the investigation and contemplation of the mercies and attributes of Almighty God; for its OBJECT, the attainment of God's favour, by obeying His will and worshipping Him in spirit and in truth; and for its END, the improvement of man's nature in this world, so as to qualify him for the vision of God and the enjoyment of eternal happiness in the world to come.

NOTES.

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NOTES.

PAGE 5, *note (a)*. From the intercourse that subsisted between the Jews and the Egyptians, after the departure of the former from Egypt, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that the latter procured copies of the writings of Moses. This intercourse was very great, being both political and commercial. The Jews traded with the Egyptians, sometimes desired their assistance against their enemies, and often entered into treaties and alliances with them. The captivity of King Jehoahaz, whom Pharaoh Necho carried away with him into Egypt, where he ended his days about the beginning of the forty-second Olympiad, and the residence

dence of the prophet Jeremiah in Egypt, and likewise that of the remainder of the Jews, whom the King of Babylon had left in Judea, could not leave the Egyptians ignorant of the Jewish concerns in general. There can, I think, be no doubt but the Egyptian Priests (who were by far the most learned men then in the world, and inquisitive in all theological matters) would obtain copies of the writings of Moses. About this period Pythagoras travelled into Egypt, from whence he is supposed to have brought these traditions into Greece. By his disciples they were, it is imagined, communicated to Socrates, who communicated them to Plato. Plato, that he might be more perfectly instructed in them, went himself into Egypt; and from this source, it is very reasonable to suppose, he acquired

acquired the knowledge of that tradition he calls sacred.

Page 6, *note (b)*. It is necessary in this place to reconcile the apparent disagreement in the language St. Paul held to the Athenians and Romans on the subject of their ignorance and knowledge of God. When he observed at Athens the altar on which was the inscription, "To the unknown God," he tells them, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." This inscription is somewhat similar to that on the temple of Sais in Egypt; "I am whatever hath been, and is, and shall be; and no mortal hath yet pierced through the veil that shrouds me." Under this description, the literate Egyptians worshipped the supreme God, Creator and abso-

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lute Lord of all things in heaven and earth, by the title of Ammon or Hammon; and under the title of the "Unknown God," the literate Greeks worshipped their Jupiter, Zeus or Upatos; as the literate Romans worshipped Him under the title of Deus Optimus Maximus; each of these nations considering Him as supreme Lord of all things in heaven and earth, the Creator of gods and men. Now that St. Paul knew that the literate Athenians had a knowledge of God's essence to a certain degree, is incontestibly proved by his referring them to their own poets; "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said." The knowledge therefore that St. Paul at this time meant to communicate to them, was not the knowledge of God's omniscience

science or omnipotence, for this they knew already; but it was the knowledge peculiarly revealed by the Gospel of Christ, which may be inferred from his subsequent address to them; "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again on this matter." Thus St. Paul's oration was chiefly to inform them of what indeed they were entirely ignorant, namely, that this life was a state of probation, and that they were, after this life, to rise again, and on a day appointed by God to be brought to judgment. St. Paul after-

wards communicated to the Romans the same Gospel information, though he expressly tells them they knew God. There is therefore in the Apostle's language only an apparent, but no real disagreement; for both the literate Greeks and Romans knew sufficiently the nature of God, to be sensible that His worship was profaned by the idolatrous worship of the vulgar, though they were equally ignorant with the vulgar of the invaluable truths communicated by revelation.

Page 7, *note (c)*. See Cudworth, p. 357.

Page 7, *note (d)*. It is very clear from the writings of Plato, that both himself and Socrates admitted a plurality of Gods. In his *Timæus*, he actually asserts that plurality, declaring, not only the

the sun and moon, but likewise the earth itself to be animated, and to be a God or Goddess: moreover in his book of Laws, and his *Epinomis*, which is said to have been written in his old age, he much insists upon the divinity of the sun, moon, and stars; and complains of the young students of Athens, for being so much infected with the Anaxagorean doctrine, as to entertain a contrary opinion. That Socrates was likewise conformable to the Pagan religion and worship, not only appears from his requesting his friends, with his last dying words, and after he had drank poison, to offer a votive cock for him to *Æsculapius*, and from his having sacrificed to the Pythian Apollo, but likewise from his *Apology*, in which he professes to acknowledge the sun, moon, and stars, for Gods, condemning

the contrary doctrine of Anaxagoras as irrational and absurd.—Cudworth, p. 400.

Page 10, *note (e)*. Aristomenes offered three hundred men in sacrifice to Jupiter of Ithome, among whom was Theopompus King of Sparta. And Plutarch informs us, that Themistocles offered men in sacrifice to propitiate the Gods in his war with the Persians.—Plutarch in Themist. and Potter's Antiquities of Greece, vol. i. p. 218.

Page 11, *note (f)*. Caracalla was such a wretch, that he intended to have put his own father to death, as he actually did his brother Geta, in his mother's arms, killing the friends and dependants of his father and brother, to the computed amount of twenty thousand persons.

Commodus

Commodus debauched his own sisters, and kept three hundred boys for his unnatural lust. And the Empress Faustina, though consort to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, prostituted herself in the most publick and notorious manner to a common gladiator.

Page 18, *note (g)*. Plutarch, in his life of Aristides, mentions indeed a fact, which seems to contradict this opinion: he relates that, when Mardonius the Persian assaulted the Grecian army, Pausanias the Lacedæmonian general offered sacrifice, and finding it not acceptable to the Gods, he commanded the Lacedæmonians to lay down their shields, and make no resistance, but attend to his directions. They obeyed, and, though the Persian horse charged, suffered them-

selves to be slain in their ranks, till, another sacrifice being offered, which proved propitious, the augur foretold victory. Notwithstanding Plutarch's credit as an historian is very great, this relation seems incredible upon any other principle than that of Pausanias having a set of mutinous soldiers in his army, whom he wished to get rid of, by placing them in the foremost ranks.

Page 19, *note (h)*. There is something so extremely puerile and ridiculous in these marks of Pagan superstition, that they would be incredible, unless history acquainted us with the whole œconomy of them, and that a particular augur (Pullarius) early in the morning, first commanding a general silence, ordered the coop, or penn, where these chickens were

were kept, to be opened, and threw down a handful of crumbs or corn. If the chickens did not immediately run fluttering to the meat, if they scattered it with their wings, if they went by without taking notice of it, or if they flew away, the omen was reckoned unfortunate: but if they leaped immediately from the penn, and eat so greedily as to let some of the meat drop from their mouths on the pavement, every thing successful and fortunate was to be expected. It was equally among others a fortunate prognostick, if the bull, when sacrificed, wagged his tail.—Kennet's Roman Antiquities.

Page 22, *note (i)*. Potter's Grecian Antiquities.

Page 24, *note (k)*. That the Pagans
ascribed

ascribed human passions, affections, and frailties to their Gods, is abundantly clear from Homer, and likewise from Hesiod, who informs us, that when Jupiter decreed the great and solemn oath of the Gods should be that by the Stygian Lake, he ordained, that if any God swore falsely, he should be debarred the use of nectar, and be deprived of his divinity for one hundred years.—Potter's Antiquities, vol. i. p. 248.

Page 25, *note (1)*. Solomon traded to the East Indies. The Egyptians, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Tyrians carried on a great commerce, and especially Ptolemæus Philadelphus, of whom Athenæus says, (lib. v. p. 203) that, besides six score galleys of an extraordinary size, he had more than four thousand ships, kept

kept for the service of the state and the improvement of trade.

Page 26, *note (m)*. The library at Alexandria, originally founded by Ptolemy Soter, was increased by the princes of his race, till at last it contained seven hundred thousand volumes, four hundred thousand of which were in that quarter of the city called Bruchion, and three hundred thousand in a library called Serapion. In the war between Cæsar and the Alexandrians, the library of Bruchion was consumed, but that of Serapion was not damaged. And to this library Cleopatra added two hundred thousand volumes, presented to her by Mark Anthony. This valuable library subsisted till the year of our Lord 642, continually unfolding its treasures to the learned: when
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Alexandria, in that year, was taken by the Saracens. John surnamed the Grammarian was much esteemed by Amri-Ebnol-as, the Saracen general, and requested him to bestow on him this library. Amri said he must first obtain leave of his master Omar, to whom he accordingly wrote. Omar's answer was, that, if those books contained the same doctrine with the Koran, they could not be of any use, as the Koran was sufficient, and comprehended all necessary truths: but if they contained any particulars contrary to that book, they ought to be destroyed. In consequence of this answer they were all condemned to the flames, without farther examination, and for that purpose were distributed to the keepers of the publick bagnios, where for the space of six months they were used for fuel, instead

stead of wood.—Rollin's Ancient Hist.
vol. vii. p. 209.

Page 43, *note (n)*. If this inference be just, how singularly does it prove the accomplishment of the following prophecy of Jeremiah: "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." This prophecy was delivered more than six hundred years before the promulgation of the Gospel, which, by its general diffusion of the knowledge of God to the poor, and the lowest classes of mankind, completely fulfils it: but it is impossible to apprehend its force or beauty, without some knowledge of heathen mythology.

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The priests and literate men of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, took all imaginable care to conceal the knowledge of the true God from the vulgar; and at the same time that they boasted of this knowledge themselves, they despised others for their ignorance of it. Reasons have been already assigned why the poor never would have known religious truth without the interposition of God; and our Saviour himself makes its general communication a proof of His divine mission: for when John's disciples came to ask Him who He was, among other criterions by which He proves himself the Messiah, He says to the disciples of John, "Tell him, the poor have the Gospel preached to them." Origen, who was himself an Egyptian by birth, informs us that the Egyptians had two species of theology,

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the one arcane and recondite, which was concealed from the vulgar, and communicated only to kings, priests, and learned men; the other adapted to the understandings of the lower classes of the people, consisting of mere external symbols and ceremonies. And, in his theological contest with Celsus, he further observes, what we have now affirmed concerning the difference betwixt the wise and ignorant men of Egypt may be equally said of the Persians, amongst whom, as well as the Syrians and Indians, religious rites are performed rationally by those who are ingenious, whilst the superficial vulgar look no further in the observation of them, than to the external symbol or ceremony.

Page 47, *note (o)*. See Plato's *Euthyphron*.

Page

Page 65, *note (p)*. See a very elegant Essay on Delicacy, by Dr. Lancaster, in the first volume of Fugitive Pieces, published by Doddsley, 1765.

Page 83, *note (q)*. The character of Catiline in former, that of the late Duke of Orleans in modern times, and the conduct of the French Convention at this moment, are expositions of the truth of this remark. It would be happy if no other kingdom than France exhibited such examples. In this country, we have seen, and do see, a great deal too much of this vicious ambition; we see it, at this hour, convening assemblies of the people for the express purpose of disseminating disloyalty, disaffection, and sedition, throughout the nation, plunging its traitorous dagger into the very heart
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of England, by revealing state information, corresponding with her enemies, and concerting plans for her destruction as an empire. Can there be a man in the island so infatuated as not to see through the selfish ambition of these men, that their views are solely and exclusively their own self-aggrandizement, and that, to accomplish this, they are ready and willing to sacrifice King, Lords, and Commons, the constitution of the realm, and the welfare and property of every honest man and loyal subject in the kingdom? Lord Bacon observes, that there are men in the world capable of setting another man's house on fire, to roast their own eggs. These are the men, more abandoned than the inebriated Thais, who fired, or caused to be fired, the splendid palace of Persepolis. These

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ambitious men, without her excuse, would fire a much nobler palace, the august and venerable fabrick of the English constitution; that palace, where civil and religious liberty, where humanity, mercy, justice, and the fine arts reside: all these, and the palace itself they would burn, from the mere principle of self-aggrandizement, with as little remorse as Nero did Rome; and then, adding the hypocrisy of Cromwell to the wickedness of Catiline, they would impute the conflagration to his majesty's ministers, with exactly the same truth as Nero imputed that of Rome to the Christians.

Page 110, *note (r)*. A maxim not to be found in the politics of Machiavel, but perhaps of more real use to a state than any one he has written; and if the
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French nation had paid proper attention to it, their own happiness, and that of Europe, would not have been diminished ; neither would they be considered, as they now are, a set of atheistical monsters, and savage men, that, like so many wild beasts, require to be chained down for the repose and security of mankind.

Page 112, *note (s)*. Machiavel particularly recommends that his Prince should not be instructed in religion, the principles of which, he pretends, enervate the mind, and disqualify it for all noble enterprises ; in other words, it prevents his being a tyrant and a murderer, which the sort of great men in the estimation of Machiavel (who was himself put to the torture as a conspirator, usually are. It is to be hoped the reason of man, improved

by religion, will, some time or other, rise superior to that barbarous Gothic prejudice (which still very much enslaves it) of annexing as much or more esteem to the destroyers, than they do to the benefactors of mankind.

Page 115, *note (1)*. The faint worship in the Romish church is just as idolatrous as Pagan worship; for Plutarch informs us of the creed of the literate Pagans in this particular, in his treatise on Isis and Osiris; in which he remarks, that philosophers honoured the image of God in inanimate things, by which means they ascended to the Deity; but did not consider these inanimate things as God; as there is but one God and one Providence. But all worship in which man kneels before any image or saint, is idolatrous,

trous, and estranges the heart from God, and is so represented in the Scriptures by the prophet Ezekiel: "their heart is
"estranged from me through their idols."

As a remarkable proof that the lower class of people in the Romish church pay even more honour to their saints than to God, a man in Ireland was brought before a magistrate on a charge of theft; and being sworn on the Bible, he declared himself innocent. But when the person who accused him, desired he might be sworn by the saint whom he adored, the man positively refused; nor could he by any means be induced to do so, but confessed himself guilty of the fact.

Page 131, *note (u)*. Here it may be asked, what possible connection can there be between the doctrines of a revealed religion,

ligion, and the balance of power? I answer, just the same as between the tea thrown overboard at Boston in America, and the French revolution. In both cases they may be considered as seeds, which gradually produced their respective fruits of peace and war.

Page 135, *note (w)*. I have heard it observed, that the provision made for the poor of this kingdom is not, upon the whole, beneficial either to the poor themselves, or the state. Those who make this remark, I apprehend, have never sufficiently considered the subject, and, I am persuaded, have never seen the poor of great states, such as France or Germany, or even of Ireland. Probably the extreme misery of the poor, in the former countries, and the frequent insurrections in the latter,

ter, are, in great measure, to be ascribed to the want of such an institution; and the superior quantum of honesty and integrity in the poor of England (though that will very well admit of increase) over the poor on the continent, well known to those who have made the comparison, is to be attributed, in no inconsiderable degree, to our humane provision for the poor; and by which the kingdom is not in the least injured: for every shilling, thus charitably advanced, being spent in England, it circulates and disseminates every where, in the most beneficial way possible, pervading every county, city, and village, and may be compared to a thousand small rivulets, watering the profitable field of internal commerce, a species of traffick, of all others, the most beneficial to a state. It is impossible to prevent

prevent occasional abuses in the most perfect human institutions; and there are doubtless frequent abuses of this in the metropolis, in cities, and in the great towns in this nation. But the reverse is the case in the country. There the assessment for the relief of the poor is chiefly made by the farmers, and distributed by them; and, as they are intimately acquainted with each person in their parish, they are not liable to any other imposition but what may arise from the susceptibility and tenderness of their feelings: therefore whatever abuses there may be of the poor-laws in cities or great towns, the country is free from them.

Page 138, *note (x)*. It is an observation of Cicero's, that virtue is not natural to man, and though the seeds
of

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of virtue are in his mind, that they continue in a dormant state, unless matured and brought to perfection by education.

FINIS.

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of virtue are in his mind, that they
continue in a constant state, unless
brought and brought to perfection by the

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